

Golf Advisory Board
7:00 PM Monday, March 3, 2014
Spicer House
Special Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jim Castleberry at 7:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Mark Berry, Tim Castleberry, Chris Conley, Bruce Flax, Todd Goodhue, Margaret Hirsch, Jim Kamercia, Ralph Little, Brian McCallen, Eric Morrison, Bob Sedotti
Duncan Olding and Jim Streeter were not in attendance.

III. Approval of Minutes: December 2, 2013 – Special Meeting

Motion to accept minutes made by Jim Castleberry, second by Margaret. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Citizens Petitions and Comments

Jim said he had heard complaints there were geese on the course. Until the course opens and more people are on the premises, there is no viable solution short of a resident dog. Mark said the town is waiting for quotes from a number of dog breeders.

V. Correspondence/Communications

A. Board Members

VI. Reports

Golf Course Report

Todd reported that SGC made a fractional amount of money (\$380) in February because course was closed all 28 days of the month. (He noted that February, 2013 was also a non-revenue month). SGC was open for several days in January, and brought in roughly \$8,000 in revenue.

VII. Old Business

A. Approval of Golf Rates for 2014

The rates were approved with a 2% across-the-board increase, as per the town's purview.

B. Customer Satisfaction Survey

Mark said a survey was conducted at the end of the 2013 golf season. Some 261 responses were received. (It is statistically valid). He said that the customer assessments overall were very positive, but noted that there were opportunities for improvement (bunkers, speed of play, clubhouse, restaurant, etc).

Mark noted that a lot of valuable information can be found in the survey results. For example, when asked what made them decide to play at SGC instead of somewhere else, players cited Location, Quality of the Course and Price as the main factors.

Golfers also rated a number of key categories in the "Very good to Excellent" range, including pro shop staff and service, overall condition of course, first impression of the course, likelihood they would recommend SGC, and overall golf experience, among other categories. 94% of respondents said the golf course met their expectations for the fee paid.

One surprising survey finding was the fact that 45% of the respondents travel 25 miles or more from their home to the golf course. Mark said enhanced marketing (re: rack cards) could be directed further north and west of Groton. Jim said in future, player zip codes could be gathered to get a clearer picture of market dispersion.

Over 80% of the surveyed players are above 50 years of age. Todd said SGC is thinking of changing the color of the forward tees, i.e., from red to another color so they're not stigmatized as ladies tees.

Tim suggested the GAB review the survey data for more detailed discussion at the next meeting.

C. 2014 Meeting Schedule

1. Meeting scheduled for Sept. 1 is Labor Day – change day of meeting

Tim suggested moving the originally scheduled meeting date on Mon., Sept. 1 (Labor Day) to Mon., Sept. 8. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Add a December meeting? Propose Golf Rates in Nov., vote in Dec.

Tim led a brief discussion about scheduling a December meeting to enable the GAB to propose golf rates in November and vote on them in December. Motion made by Bruce to add a December meeting. Seconded by Bob. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business

A. Membership Drive Promotion and Ranger Program

Todd said the SGC needs to find ways to boost membership. Currently, the membership roll is flat at 251 members. Todd suggested that if a current member brings in a new member, the existing member and the new member will both get a 10% discount. The reasoning is that a two-way incentive will convince fence-sitters to join and serve as a good way to re-recruit previous members. The consensus was that all members should get a 10% discount per new member recruited. To boost daily-fee play, Ralph suggested stamping each player's receipt with a 20% discount for a round played within a week as a way to boost incremental revenue.

Todd said he'd draft a policy card about the incentive program to cover all contingencies. A motion was made and seconded to endorse the 10% discount program.

As for the Ranger Program, Todd said he was told by the town's HR department that the current set-up is not lawful. At present, rangers receive a complimentary membership and also receive 1099s at the end of year, despite the fact that they are not independent contractors. To show incoming revenue, SGC could make it a requirement that all rangers be members, which the HR department said is OK. Rangers would be paid, for example, \$10 / hr. in salary, with 24 weeks of employment. Rangers could apply for senior membership, or opt for a full membership at the resident rate. With two shifts per day (6-hour shifts in shoulder season, 7-hour shifts in peak season), SGC would be assured of full ranger coverage.

B. Cumulus Radio Advertising proposal

Todd said SGC barter with a couple of different marketing vehicles. Golf Mag. Cumulus Radio has approached SGC and asked for 150 rounds of golf in return for 30-second spots on four regional radio stations. There would also be an opportunity to air special deals. However, with a sizable core of the customer base more distant (beyond 25 miles) than local, Ralph asked about extend SGC's reach to Providence, Hartford and New Haven. He also asked about the possibility of hosting a radio show at SGC. As an alternative to radio, Bruce asked about targeting regional colleges, from Conn College and the Coast Guard to Yale and points west in Fairfield Co. A motion was entertained by Tim not to go forward with the Cumulus proposal. Seconded by Jim. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. Next Meeting Date: Monday, April 7, 2014, 7:00 PM at Spicer House

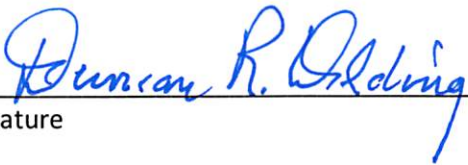
To avoid a conflict with a town council meeting scheduled for Monday, April 7, a motion was made to reschedule the next meeting date to Monday, April 14, 7:00 p.m. at Spicer House. Motion passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment


Time – 8:50 p.m. Ralph motioned to adjourn, seconded by Chris. Motion passed unanimously.

Brian McCallen
Secretary, GAB

Minutes have been approved and accepted.



Signature



Date